

**F**

129

Q12W74



QUAKER HILL

(LOCAL HISTORY)

S E R I E S

III. Quaker Hill in the  
Eighteenth Century

BY

REV. WARREN H. WILSON





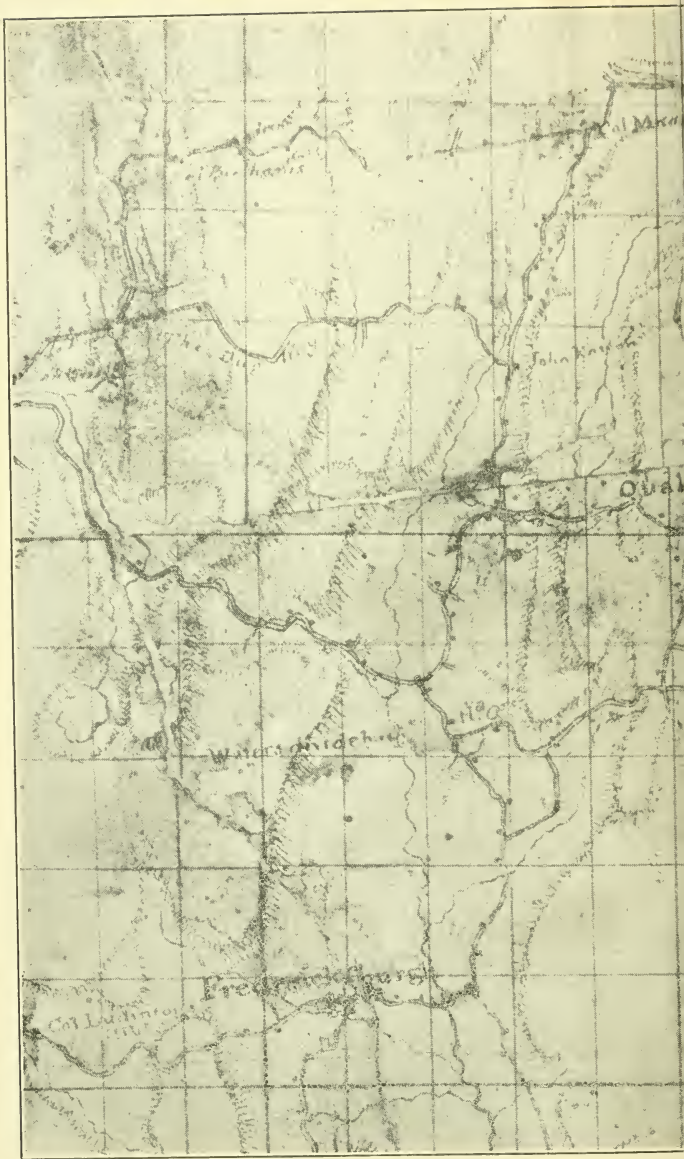
Class F129

Book Q12V32









MAP OF QUAKER HILL AND VICIN







# QUAKER HILL

## IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY

---

SECOND EDITION

---

BY

REV. WARREN H. WILSON

---

READ AT THE THIRD ANNUAL MEETING OF THE  
QUAKER HILL CONFERENCE, SEPTEMBER THE  
SEVENTH, NINETEEN HUNDRED AND ONE.

---

PUBLISHED BY THE QUAKER HILL CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION  
QUAKER HILL, NEW YORK  
1905

## **Publications**

### **OF THE QUAKER HILL CONFERENCE ASSOCIATION**

**A Critical Study of the Bible**, by Rev. Newton M. Hall of Springfield, Mass.

**The Relation of the Church at Home to the Church Abroad**, by Rev. George William Knox, D. D., of New York.

**A Tenable Theory of Biblical Inspiration**, by Prof. Irving Francis Wood, Ph. D., of Northampton, Mass.

**The Book Farmer**, by Edward H. Jenkins, Ph. D., of New Haven, Conn.

### **LOCAL HISTORY SERIES**

**David Irish—A Memoir**, by his daughter, Mrs. Phoebe T. Wanzer of Quaker Hill, N. Y.

**Quaker Hill in the Eighteenth Century**, by Rev. Warren H. Wilson of Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Quaker Hill in the Nineteenth Century**, by Rev. Warren H. Wilson of Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Hiram B. Jones and His School**, by Rev. Edward L. Chichester of Quaker Hill, N. Y.

**Richard Osborn—A Reminiscence**, by Margaret B. Monahan of Quaker Hill, N. Y.

**Albert J. Akin—A Tribute**, by Rev. Warren H. Wilson of Brooklyn, N. Y.

**Ancient Homes and Early Days at Quaker Hill**, by Amanda Akin Stearns of Quaker Hill, N. Y.

**Thomas Taber and Edward Shove—A Reminiscence**—by Rev. Benjamin Shove of New York.

**Some Glimpses of the Past**, by Alicia Hopkins Taber of Pawling, N. Y.

**The Purchase Meeting**, by James Wood of Mt. Kisco, N. Y.

Any one of these publications may be had by addressing the Secretary,

REV. EDWARD L. CHICHESTER,

Quaker Hill, N. Y.

**Price Ten Cents.**

**Twelve Cents Postpaid.**

## QUAKER HILL IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

---

In the eighteenth century Quaker Hill was the chosen asylum of men of peace. Yet it became equally the rallying place of periodic outbursts of the fighting spirit of that warlike age; and it was invaded during the great struggle for national independence by the camps of Washington.

There is a dignity common to the noble Washington battling for liberty, and the Quaker pioneer serenely planning seven years before the Revolution for the freedom of the slave. But he was a Revolutionist, they were loyal to King George; he was a man of blood, brilliant in the garb of a warrior, and they were men of peace, dreaming only of the kingdom of God. He was fighting for a definite advance in liberty to be enjoyed at once; they were set on an enfranchisement that involved one hundred years; and a greater war at the end than his revolution. Their records contain no mention of his presence here, though his soldiers seized and fortified the meeting-house. His letters never mention

the Quakers, neither their picturesque abode, their dreams of freedom for the slave, nor their Tory loyalty.

Each cherished his ideal and staked his life and ease and happiness upon it. Each, after the fashion of a narrow age, ignored the other's adherence to that ideal. To us they are sublime figures in bold contrast crossing that far-off stage: Washington, booted, with belted sword, spurring his horse up the western slope of the Hill, to review the soldiers of the Revolution in 1778; and Paul Osborn, Joseph Irish and Abner Hoag, plain men, unarmed save with faith, riding their plough horses down the eastern slope in 1775, to plead for the freeing of the slave at the Yearly Meeting at Flushing.

Both the soldier and the Quaker laid their bones in the dust of the Hill, in common faith in liberty and equality: we have not yet settled the problems for which they fought. The history of Quaker Hill in the eighteenth century is the story of these two schools of idealists, who ignored each other, but were moved with the same passion, obeyed the same spirit. It is said that a locality never loses the impression made upon it by its earliest residents. Certain it is that the roots of modern things are to be traced in that earliest period, and through a

continuous self-contained life until this day.

This "Old Meeting House" in which we are assembled to consider the past, of which it is a conspicuous monument, was founded and maintained as a house of peace, and its walls echoed on every first day to the words of peace; yet it had to share its history with the record of men of war and deeds of blood. It is said that on a certain day in the Revolutionary time the congregation filed out at the close of the meeting and the soldiers marched in. That fabled scene is emblematic of the history of Quaker Hill in the eighteenth century. It is a picture of the plain garb and the scarlet coat; a story told in the Quaker's "thee and thou" and the soldiers challenge and pass-word; the men of authority in those days were the Continental officer and the Quaker elder. One feels about him the serene and solemn silence of the Friends' worship, and hears from without the clank of marching men the tramp of horses and the sharp word of command. This very building is a memorial to both tendencies. Here are the benches and raised seats for worship, and in the gable ends of the garret above are the portholes in the century old planks for the rifles of armed men. This house has been a meeting-house and a fortress.

## THE OBLONG

The name of Quaker Hill in the eighteenth century was "The Oblong." That name unlocks the religious history of the past, and is the clue to the path of the locality through every succeeding generation until recent times. It is still the name of the Quaker Meeting of this place. The name refers to a strip of land two miles in width, which forms an eastern fringe to New York state, through the counties of Westchester, Putnam and Dutchess. It was granted to New York ; and in compensation the lands on which Stamford and Greenwich stand were granted to Connecticut after a long and bitter dispute. The end of the dispute and the first settlement of the Oblong came, for obvious reasons, in the same years. The first considerable settlement of pioneers was made on Quaker Hill in 1731, by Friends, who came from Harrison's Purchase, now a part of Rye. Mr. James Wood, in his Bicentennial Address in 1895, thus describes the settlement of the Oblong :

The eastern side of the country had been settled by Presbyterians from Connecticut, and the western side along the Hudson River by the Dutch. The feeling between them was far from friendly. Their disputes had been very bitter, and Rye and Bedford had revolted from New

York's jurisdiction. Their whipping-posts stood ready for the punishment of any from the river settlements who committed even slight offenses within their limits. As the two peoples naturally repelled each other they had left a strip of land, comparatively unoccupied, between them. This continued in nearly a north and south line, parallel with the river, and a little more than midway between it and the Connecticut and Massachusetts lines, as far as they extended. Into and through the strip of land the Quaker stream flowed, like a liquid injected into a fissure in the rocks. Each Quaker home as it was settled became a resting place for those who followed, for it was a cardinal principle of Quaker hospitality to keep open house for all fellow members, under all circumstances.

There had been a half century in which this was all disputed land, between the Dutch at New York and the English in New England. Then followed a half century of dispute as to the boundary between sister colonies, which are now New York and Connecticut. As soon as this was settled in 1731 the emigration flowed in, and the history of Quaker Hill, the first settlement in the Oblong, begins.

The first settler had been Nathan Bird-sall and his wife Jane Langdon, of Quaker ancestry, who had made a home in 1728 on land that is now a part of the Albro Haines estate, and probably near the present old house owned by the family of Leonard Lyon. They had come from Danbury on horseback, because there were no roads north of that point. The next settler

was Benjamin Ferriss, in 1730, whose house stood in the memory of persons now living on the John J. Vanderburgh land now owned by the Hoag-Post family, near the tree in the field north of the barns and west of the Meeting-house.

In the next ten years came many settlers to the Oblong ; among them David Akin, and John, Mary, Elisha and Josiah, his children, from Dartmouth ; from whom, and from his other six children born on or near the Oblong, are descended the various lines of Akins of the neighborhood. At this time also came Paul Osborn, from whose nephew and heir, Isaac Osborn, are descended the Osborns of the Hill. Also Jedediah Wing, Jesse Irish, John Hoag, whose names bespeak their parentage of Quaker Hill families, came ; with others, whose names have passed away from the list of residents of the Hill.

The houses in which the pioneers lived for the first few years have been pictured to us by Cornelius Van Tienhoven, an early Dutch official. "They dig," writes he, "a square pit in the ground, cellar fashion, six or seven feet deep, as long and as broad as they think proper, case the inside with wood all around the wall and line the wood with bark of trees or some-



thing else to prevent the caving in of the earth ; floor this cellar with planks, and wainscot it overhead for a ceiling ; raise a roof of spars clear up and cover the spars with bark or green sods ; so they can live dry and warm in these houses with their entire families."

#### MEETINGS AND MEETING-HOUSES.

The years 1740-1742 are known in the religious history of America as those of "The Great Revival." In 1740 George Whitefield preached from Philadelphia to Boston. During those three years twenty thousand were added to the churches in New England. A great revival of piety and a quickening of religious activity were felt in all parts of the country. In those years Quaker Hill came to herself religiously, built a meeting-house and organized a local meeting, known as the Preparative Meeting.

With the early pioneers came the worship of the Friends ; many of them were members of Purchase Meeting, near Rye, the first meeting of Quakers established on the mainland in this state. For a number of years the religious history of Quaker Hill must be read in the minutes of Purchase Meeting, in which for the first ten

years the pioneers had their membership. The first mention of a Quaker meeting in this neighborhood is that of New Milford, in the minutes of Purchase, in the seventh month, 1739. The first entry at Purchase concerning Quaker Hill is the reception in 1741 of William Russell and his wife, who in the following year appears in the minutes as overseer of the weekly meeting at Oblong. The following year, 1742, has this minute (the date, 1741, in the original records is evidently the clerk's error, commonly made at the beginning of a new year): "was appointed a committee to conclude about the dementions of a meeting house to be built at the Oblong, the persons appointed are Benjamin Ferriss, William Russell, James Clement and Thomas Franklin, and to build a meeting-house there." Three months after Purchase Meeting secures the settlement of a Preparative Meeting at the Oblong, "for themselves and their meetings adjacent." This was a notable year for Quaker Hill, both in religious growth, and in the coming that year of well known names to the Hill; such for instance as Jedediah Wing and Eliza his wife from Falmouth. It was a notable gain to the Hill to have as a resident William Russell. He was a progres-

sive and liberal spirit, a Prophet Haggai to make the people arise and build. We will see later that the second meeting-house, now standing, was erected upon his land. His name is connected with every notable event. Even in the War of the Revolution thirty-six years later, he was one of the few Quakers to gain the praise of Washington's officers, for his liberal spirit and kindness to the troops. From the month of his arrival in the community his name is written in the record of every event on Quaker Hill.

Two years after, in 1744, the meeting at Oblong became a Monthly Meeting ; that is, a permanent and legislative congregation. That same year Oblong took the leadership in the establishment of the first Quarterly Meeting on the mainland in this state ; the first session being held at Purchase in 1745. In 1783 Nine Partners Quarterly Meeting was set off. By the year 1800 Oblong, which had remained in Purchase Quarterly, was in Nine Partners Quarterly ; and so remained. In 1744, the year of religious advance, the deed to the land on which the meeting-house here stood was presented.

The present meeting-house, in which we are assembled, was erected about 1764.

The first meeting-house was at the end of twenty years too small, and had served its day. It stood upon land which is now owned by Miss Rachel Swan, directly across the road to the south from the present meeting-house. I am informed by Richard T. Osborn that the piece of land on which it stood extended from this road southward as far on the road to Sherman as the tenant-house on Miss Swan's place, and on the main Quaker Hill road to Mizzen Top, as far south as a line from that tenant-house toward the barns of Edmund L. Post. This land was used as a burial-ground, the western end of it by the Friends, and the eastern end of it by the Army of the Revolution, which in its winter cantonment here in 1778 buried many soldiers there. The first meeting-house was moved from this site in 1769 to the Osborn Homestead, the present residence of Stephen Osborn, where it was used as a barn for one hundred and fifteen years. It was torn down in 1884 by Stephen Osborn, and only a few fragments of it are known to exist, in the form of a staff for an aged saint's support or an ancient timber in a wall.

The deeds of the land on which this meeting-house is built are dated 1764, 4th

month, sixteenth and seventeenth, respectively. The land was transferred in two parcels by William Russell and Zebulon Ferriss to the following persons: "Benjamin Ferris, David Akin, Ebenezer Peaslee, David Hoag, Joseph Irish, Nehemiah Merritt, Abram Wing, all of Beekman's Precinct." The first parcel of ground deeded by Zebulon Ferriss on the sixteenth, on consideration of four pounds received by him, was described as follows: "Beginning at the southeast corner of my acre lot at north side of the public road, running west forty feet, north 132 feet, east forty feet, south 132 feet, where it first began." The other deed by which William Russell on the next day transferred his land on consideration of eight pounds received by him, describes its bounds as follows: "Beginning at north side of road opposite Old Friends' Meeting-house and at southeast corner of Benjamin Ferris' acre-lot, north  $12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  east between acre-lot and William Russell's land east  $12\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$  eight rods north, five rods east, eight rods south to public road and to point of (beginning,) forty rods of land." Both deeds describe the purpose of the transfer as follows: "To be applied to the use and only service of the Society of the people called Quakers, to

build and erect a meeting-house or meeting-houses on, and to accommodate the same; of which land no partition or diversion shall ever hereafter at any time be made but shall continue an absolute and entire and undivided estate in common unto them, the said Benjamin Ferris (et al), and to their heirs, survivors and survivor, for the only use and service of the said society as aforesaid forevermore."

It is evident that this land and the meeting-house erected upon it were paid for by subscriptions taken in several meetings with which Oblong was associated. Purchase Meeting records in the next year, 1765, 11th month, 14th, that "Teddeman Hull brought subscription for raising money towards the meeting house at Oblong, and a receipt from Ebenezer Peaslee for the money which he collected on the subscription, amounting to forty-three shillings from the Purchase Meeting." A subscription from "Shepaqua" is acknowledged by Purchase Meeting, receipted for by David Hoag, the amount being £1, 15s. and the purpose thereof the paying for Oblong Meeting house." The minutes of Yearly Meeting show that in 1764 "Quarterly meetings are [officially] desired to order subscriptions for Oblong Meeting-house,"

then being erected. And in 1765 the "meeting-house at Oblong is reported built and money in advance thereon." Also "Thomas Dobson and Isaac Martin made report that they had settled with the Trustees of Oblong Meeting-house, and that it appeared that the Cost of Said House amounted to £679, 9s. and that they had received from our several meetings £551, 19s 3d. So there is a Ballance due for said House of £127, 9s 9d."

The dimensions of the house are shown by a previous minute in 1763, by which the Yearly Meeting consents to the proposal to build a meeting-house at Oblong and advises that it shall be "a Framed House of Timber, and the dimensions to be 45 feet long & 40 feet wide & 15 foot stud in height to admit of Gallerys."

From the time of the erection of the meeting-house for the rest of the century the history of the meeting and the neighborhood is one of unbroken prosperity, which the Revolutionary War did not permanently retard. In 1781 the collections in the meeting at Oblong were one pound and four shillings ; when that at New Milford was four shillings; and that of Appoquague was eight shillings and nine pence; again it was one pound and twelve shill-

ings when Appoquague's was fourteen shillings and three pence, and that of New Milford two shillings and nine pence; again, it was "in hard money" four pounds three and six, when that of Appoquage was one pound. There are other like indications to the effect that Oblong was in those days a wealthier, and better settled region, with more substantial persons living in it, than the surrounding neighborhoods.

#### COUNTY AFFAIRS.

The most conspicuous town in the neighborhood of Quaker Hill in the eighteenth century was Fredericksburg, which is now Patterson village. The whole region was therefore colored with that name; and Washington, who wrote letters from headquarters on the road from Pawling to Quaker Hill—the same road then as now—dated them "Fredericksburgh." This in spite of the fact that Pawling had been set off as a town and named, nine years before his writing.

When the first settlers came to the Hill the County was becoming so generally settled that laws were being passed to prevent damage from swine; it was already forbidden to keep one's pigs in the public road; and the remedy was characteristic of



the times—they could be shot. Before the first settler on the Hill the width of wagons, from one tire to the other, had been fixed by law at four feet ten inches. But the woods were full of wolves and panthers; and there were Indians who spent their time mostly in hunting. Bounties were offered for the killing of the wild beasts, twice as much to a white man as to an Indian. Even after the Revolution the necessity of a vigorous war on wild beasts is shown in the laws and bounties offered.

When Oblong began to be settled there were 1,727 people in the county; and in six years twice as many. Among these were 262 blacks, undoubtedly all slaves. So that, during the years when settlers were pouring in, there were coming with them the seeds of all future controversies and of the making of history; slaves, and those who would free them, meeting-houses and wild, warlike woodsmen who were to enter the army or become the bandits of the period.

By the beginning of the Revolution one man in twenty in the county was a negro slave. The action taken by Oblong Meeting for the abolition of slavery, one hundred years before Abraham Lincoln, was effective only on Quaker Hill. Mr. Archibald

Dodge, now living, remembers when there were slaves owned in Pawling, on the farms now occupied by E. Irving Hurd and Alexander H. Arnold. The last slave was freed on Quaker Hill in 1779.

The state of the times is well shown by two lists published about this time. The first a Sheriff's list of the landowners of the county in 1740; and the small number of names indicates that not more than one man in twenty in the county was an owner of land. It shows moreover the name of not one of the families which are known to have been on the Hill at the time.

The other list is that of the Quakers who fifteen years later, in 1755, claimed exemption from military duty. These names are to Quaker Hill what the cabin list of the passengers on the Mayflower is to New England. These are your fathers, O men of today, for they gave the Hill its character! Five years after, as types of the man of affairs—for there are two types of Quakers—John Akin and James Vanderburgh, justices of the peace, took the oath of allegiance to George the Third. Following is a list of Quakers who claimed exemption from military duty in April 1755, from James Smith's "History of Dutchess County," page 63:

Joshua Shearman, Beekman Prec'nt,		Shoemaker
Moses Shearman,	„	Laborer
Daniel Shearman,	“	“
Joseph Doty,	“	Blacksmith
John Wing,	“	Farmer
Zebulon Ferris, (Oblong)	“	“
Joseph Smith, son of Rich'd,	“	Laborer
Robert Whiteley,	“	Farmer
Elijah Doty, Oblong House,		Carpenter
Philip Allen, Oblong,		Weaver
Richard Smith,	“	Farmer
James Aiken,	“	Blacksmith
Abrah'm Chase,		
son of Henry,	“	Farmer
David Hoeg,	“	—————
John Hoeg,	“	Farmer
Jonathan Hoeg,	“	Blacksmith
Amos Hoeg, son of John,	“	Laborer
William Hoeg, son of David	“	Farmer
John Hoeg, son of John,	“	“
Ezekiel Hoeg,	“	Laborer
Judah Smith,	“	Tailor
Matthew Wing,	“	—————
Timothy Dakin	“	Farmer
Jonathan Dakin,	“	Laborer
Samuel Russell,	“	“
John Fish,	“	Farmer
Reed Ferris,	“	Shoemaker
Benjamin Ferris, Junr.,	“	Laborer

Joseph Akin,	Oblong,	Blacksmith
Israel Howland,	"	Farmer
Elisha Akin,	"	"
Isaac Haviland,	"	Blacksmith
Nathan Soule, son of George	"	Farmer
James Birdsall,	"	Laborer
Daniel Chase,	"	Farmer
Silas Mossher,		
Oswego in Beekman Precn't,	"	"
William Mosher,	"	"
Silvester Richmond,	"	"
Jesse Irish,	"	"
David Irish,	"	"
William Irish,	"	"
Josiah Bull,	"	"
Josiah Bull, Junr.,	"	"
Allen Moore,	"	"
Andrew Moore,	"	"
William Gifford,	"	"
Nathaniel Yeomans,	"	"
Eliab Yeomans,	"	"
William Parks,	"	"

This list is a fair picture of the times. If one estimate on this basis the full attendance at this meeting of Friends, it must be set down as about two hundred and fifty. It is notable how many laborers there are and how few farmers. There are just fourteen farmers mentioned here from Oblong; six men are named as common laborers,

one carpenter, one weaver, four blacksmiths, two tailors and a shoemaker. This was ten years before the Prendergast Anti-Rent War, and titles to land were still insecure. If these men, the cream of the community in physical strength and in the midst of their best years, are not land-owners—the fourteen farmers too may have been tenants—we have a state of affairs likely to produce rebellion.

The Anti-Rent War of 1766 is a forgotten event. But in that time it excited the people of Dutchess and Columbia Counties. Bodies of armed men assembled, British troopers marched from Poughkeepsie to Quaker Hill, to seize a leader of rebellion; and at the time of his trial at Poughkeepsie in August, 1766, a company of regulars with three field-pieces were brought up from New York.

#### ANTI-RENT RIOT.

The prime cause for this insurrection was the granting of the land in great areas at the beginning of the century to favored proprietors, so that the actual settlers could not become owners but only tenants. Fragments of such great estates remain in the hands of certain families till our time. The ownership of Hamersley Lake by

the family of that name is an example. The exertion of authority by these monopolists of natural rights drove the actual tillers of the soil, who had given it its value, to desperation. I have shown that in 1740 no land owners were enrolled on Quaker Hill, and that its list of most representative citizens in 1755 contained few landowners. A further cause of this conflict may have been that, in the year of the settlement of the boundaries of the Oblong it was granted to one company by the British Crown, and to another by the Colony of New York. This brought the title of all the lands on the Oblong into dispute. Moreover, boundaries were carelessly indicated and loosely described, a pile of stones or a conspicuous tree serving for a landmark. All this worked great confusion, for the settlement of which in a crude community courts were ineffective.

Finally in 1766, the popular discontent broke out to the north in armed refusal of settlers to pay the rent exacted. The movement spread from Columbia to Dutchess County. William Prendergast, who is said to have lived in a house standing on the ground covered by the golf links in Pawling, was the leader of the insurgents in this county. He assembled a band on

Quaker Hill so formidable that the Grenadiers at Poughkeepsie waited for reinforcements of two hundred troopers and two field pieces from New York before proceeding against him. The sight of the red coats was enough. Prendergast surrendered. But so great was the local excitement that to forestall an attempt at rescue he was taken a prisoner to New York. In July he was brought back for trial; and on the same boat with the King's counsel, judges, lawyers and prisoner came a company of soldiers to put down the continued disturbance in Columbia County.

The trial occurred the first fortnight of August, 1766. Prendergast was assisted in his defense by his wife, who made a strong impression on the jury, proving that her husband, before the acts of which he was accused, was "esteemed a sober, honest and industrious farmer, much beloved by his neighbors, but stirred up to act as he did by one Munro, who is absconded." So ardent was this woman advocate that the State's attorney forgot himself and moved that she be excluded from the court room. The motion was denied, and the mover of it emphatically rebuked. But there was not lacking proof of the fact of treason, and Prendergast was

convicted and sentenced to be hanged in six weeks. Then this valiant woman's energy and perseverance rose to their highest. She set off for an audience with the Governor, Sir Henry Moore, Bart., and returned about the first of September with a reprieve. Just in time she arrived, for a company of fifty mounted men had ridden the whole length of the county to rescue her husband from the jail. She convinced them of the folly of such action as they proposed, and sent them home, while she turned to the task of obtaining a pardon from the King. Here too she was successful, who had failed in nothing; and six months later George III, who required six years to be subdued by a Washington, released her husband; and they went home amid great popular rejoicings.

Although the insurrection failed, its principle was vindicated, and there are evidences that in the latter half of the century the discontent of tenants with the feudalism which had caused it, had passed away.

#### OBLONG AGAINST SLAVERY.

Important events now follow hard upon one another. The following year is the date of Quaker Hill's participation in the history of the world. For the clue to this



event I am indebted to Mr. James Wood. In this year, 1767, Oblong Meeting took action which resulted, after seven years of agitation, in the clear declaration in favor of the freeing of slaves. This was one hundred years before the Emancipation proclamation.

Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power in America" says that "Members of the Society of Friends took the lead in the opposition to slavery." There had been action taken in 1688 by a small body of Germantown Quakers, in the form of a petition to their Yearly Meeting against "buying, selling and holding men in slavery." But to this the Yearly Meeting, after eight years of delay, replied only that "the members should discourage the introduction of slavery, and be careful of the moral and intellectual training of such as they held in servitude." There the matter ended. Meantime the Quaker Meetings on Long Island in New York and Philadelphia took action recognizing slavery, with only a gradual tendency to regard the institution of slavery with disfavor. Now the time had come for putting the denomination in array against the institution.

There was a preacher of the Quakers who traveled much from 1746 to 1767

through the colonies, proclaiming that "the practice of continuing slavery is not right;" and that "liberty is the natural right equally of all men." In the last year of his propaganda occurred the event so notable in local history. Remember that this was thirteen years before the action of the State of Pennsylvania, action taken under Presbyterian, not Quaker leadership, however, which initiated the lawmaking for emancipation among the northern colonies. It was "twenty years before Wilberforce took the first step in England against the slave-trade."

"At a (Yearly) Meeting at the Meeting House at Flushing the 30th day of the 5th month, 1767, a Querie from the Quarterly Meeting of the Oblong in Relation to buying and Selling Negroes was Read in this meeting and its concluded to be left for consideration on the minds of friends until the Next Yearly Meeting. The Query is as follows: If is not consistant with Christianity to buy and Sell our Fellowmen for Slaves during their Lives, & their Posterities after them, then whether it is consistant with a Christian Spirit to keep those in Slavery that we have already in possession by Purchase, Gift or any other ways."

The year after, not without due hesitation, a committee was appointed which "drew an Essay on that subject which was read and approved and is as follows: We are of the mind that it is not convenient (considering the circumstances of things amongst us) to give an Answer to this Querie, at least at this time, as the answering of it in direct terms manifestly tends to cause divisions and may Introduce heart burnings and Strife amongst us, which ought to be Avoided, and Charity exercised, and persuasive methods pursued and that which makes for peace. We are however fully of the mind that Negroes as Rational Creature are by nature born free, and where the way opens liberty ought to be extended to them, and they not held in Bondage for Self ends. But to turn them out at large Indiscriminately—which seems to be the tendency of the Querie, will, we apprehend, be attended with great Inconveniency, as some are too young and some too old to obtain a livelyhood for themselves."

Here, then, is the first action in a legislative body, upon the freeing of slaves in America. The "Querie from Oblong" had secured a clear deliverance in favor of the essential right of the negro as a man, in favor of his being freed "where the way

opened," and against the holding of man for the service of another. The only hesitation of the meeting was frankly stated; emancipation was not to be pushed to the point of division of Christians, and was not to be accomplished to the impoverishment of the negro.

Yet if this action seems to any one like "trimming," it was following other deliverances increasingly clear and emphatic. Three years later Friends were forbidden to sell their slaves, except under conditions controlled by the Meeting. All through the communities of Friends the agitation was being carried on, and the meetings were anxious to purge themselves of the evil.

Finally in 1775 came the clear utterance of the Yearly Meeting in favor of emancipation without conditions: "it being our solid judgment that all in profession with us who hold Negroes ought to restore to them their natural right to liberty as soon as they arrive at a suitable age for freedom." At this meeting the Oblong was represented by Joseph Irish, Abner Hoag and Paul Osborn.

It only remains to picture the rest of the process by which slavery was purged away on Quaker Hill. In 1775 the practice of

buying and selling slaves had come to an end, and no public abuse was noted by the meeting in the treatment accorded to slaves by their masters. The next year there was but one slave owned by a member of the meeting; and the day he was freed in the fall of 1777 was counted by the meeting so notable that the clerk was directed to make a minute of the event. The owner had been Samuel Field, and the slave was called Philips. Another manumission in 1779 is recorded, but it was doubtless in the case of a new resident of the Hill, for it is recorded without signs of the joy exhibited in the freedom of Philips.

In the years 1782-3 the final act in emancipating the local slaves was taken, in the investigation by a committee of the Meeting into the condition of the freed slaves, and the obligations of their old masters to them. It was not very cordially received at first, but in the third year of the life and labors of the committee it was reported by them that "the negroes appear to be satisfied without further settlement." So in sixteen years the first American community freed herself from slavery. If slavery could have been ended everywhere by this method, we would be today a stronger, nobler and more united country.

## THE QUAKERS IN WAR : LOYALTY

It must not be thought that the times of the two great wars between the French and the English and the Colonies and England had no effect upon peaceful Quaker Hill. The meeting did indeed keep its testimony against war clear and distinct before its generation, but it had to exercise ceaseless vigilance. In 1775 Timothy Akin was disowned for "Training," and William Wing and Abner Hoag, Jr., are so dealt with as to "acknowledge misconduct" in signing a paper variously described as the "socetion paper" and the "sassocation paper." Two years after Preserved Dakin "acknowledges misconduct in joining an unlawful combindation." Benjamin Ferris, Jr., the son of the pioneer, expressed his sorrow formally to the meeting, the year of the camping of Washington here, for having "payed a sum of money on account of Not performing military services." Later in that same year, while still the troops were here, Elnathan Field committed the same offence, and was dealt with for a year until he made satisfactory acknowledgements. In the last three years of the war Johnan Chase, Isaac Dickerson and Henry Dickerson, and George Soule are com-

plained of, the first three for military service and the last for hiring a substitute. The two Dickersons were disowned, but Chase made amends to the meeting. More than one urgent message from Philadelphia Friends served to remind the Quakers here of their duty.

Twice during the war the meeting took action for the relief of communities at a distance, once, after the battle of White Plains, on hearing that "our Friends and others in Westchester county are much Distressed or Necessitated by Reason of the Calamity lately happened among them;" and the second time in a request to the Meeting for Sufferings to raise money "for release of the Distressed of other Denominations in this season of Colemity."

The Quakers were generally Tories, because they did not believe in rebellion. Their allegiance during the Revolution was the greatest question of those years. In January, 1777, there were rumors of a Test Act, and a very responsible committee was appointed to wait upon the "provincial Congress," to define the relations of the Quakers of this region to the government. They could call New York a "province" two years after Concord and Lexington. Ephraim Barker was disciplined

for signing such an act of allegiance. A member of the meeting was appointed, perhaps by civil authority, to read the Test Act to the meeting, but reported that "he did not feel easy to do so," and the Quarterly Meeting had to be consulted as to the reading of it.

In the fall of the year of Washington's presence here with his army, a new effort seems to have been made by Commissioners of the State of New York, to secure avowal of allegiance to the state from the Friends here, and a very large Committee was formed to consider the matter, and "to wait upon the Governor, Council and Senate of the State of New York, so called," in the matter. No very serious penalty seems to have been inflicted upon any resident of the Hill for disloyalty. There is indeed mention of the release from prison of Edward Brundage; and Enoch Hoag being imprisoned "on suspicion" was "reputably released" when a committee looked into his case.

The loyalty of the Quakers to the King was no doubt the actual motive in many things which characterized their action at that time. They were not oppressed, so far as record goes, yet they could during the Revolution refer to the State of New York



as "the alleged state of New York." Their belief in non-resistance was most emphatically a belief in non-resistance to George III. This last demure entry in the minutes of Oblong Meeting, April, 1778, I must transcribe: "The answering of the 14th Query Respecting the Defrauding of the King of his dues is omitted by reason of the Difficulty of the times therefore this meeting desires the Quarterly meeting to Consider whether it would not be well to omit the answering that part of the Query in futur until the way may appear more Clear." This action was taken by the meeting five months before the coming of Washington to the Hill, immediately after the heroic winter of Valley Forge and just before the British retreated from Philadelphia. An official body which could speak of dues to the king at that time, after their country had been separated from him for three years, surely represented a community in which the great majority were Loyalists, and the disorderly and violent were Tories.

#### MEETING-HOUSE A HOSPITAL.

A letter of great interest to the student of those times was written to the Governor of the State of New York, Hon. George

Clinton, by Dr. James Fallon, physician in charge of the sick which were left on Quaker Hill, in the meeting-house after the departure of the Continental Army. He could get no one to draw wood for his hospital in dead of winter, till finally "old Mr. Russell, an excellent and open Whig, tho' a Quaker," hired him a wagon and ox-team. He could buy no milk without paying in Continental money, six for one. He declared that "Old Ferris, the Quaker pulpiteer of this place, old Russell and his son, old Mr. Chace and his family, and Thomas Worth and his family, are the only Quakers on, or about this Hill, the public stands indebted to." The two pioneers of the Hill, the preacher and the builder, were patriots as well. He denounces the rest as Tories all, the "Meriths," Akins, Wings, Kellys, Samuel Walker, the schoolmaster, and Samuel Downing, whom he declared a spurious Quaker and agent of the enemy; also the preacher, Lancaster, "the Widow Irish;" and many he called "half-Quakers," who were probably more zealous, and certainly more violent, for Quaker and Tory principles than the Quakers themselves.

The trouble culminated in Dr. Fallon's impressing the wagons of Wing Kelly and "the Widow Irish," to take fourteen

men to Danbury and Fishkill to save their lives. The former impress was not resisted; but the soldiers who took the Irish team had to battle with a mob, headed by Abraham Wing and Benjamin Akin, who used the convalescent soldiers roughly, but could not prevent the seizure. They were not the first men to do violence for the sake of the principle of non-resistance. It is a common thing for men to go to war for the sake of peace.

So bitter were the feelings of that period that mercy to the sick and dying, food and fire to the suffering, were refused by those who advocated gentleness and mercy.

One can see that modern Quakerism has taken a gentler tone. It is not probable that any nineteenth century Quaker would have refused help in transporting dying soldiers from one hospital to another. It was easier to free one's slaves and to contend for general emancipation than to apply sublime principles in daily emergencies.

#### FREE LANCES OF THE REVOLUTION.

The period of the great wars was also a time of the prevalence of bandits in this region. The story of their depredations has always been an attractive one, and has furnished many pages for histories of the

County. I may therefore omit much that I have gathered, so familiar is the story.

The record of these years, on the pages of the clerk's minute-book, are at once a disappointment to the hopes of the reader and a stimulus to his imagination. One searches in vain for even the slightest trace of the presence in the meeting-house of the troops which trustworthy tradition declares were quartered there. There is no record of the presence in the meeting-house of the "Tories" or guerillas of the Revolution; and not a word about the makers of the rifle-ports in the gables of this building, which the present writer discovered there; unless it be the unruffled and serene utterance, under date of 8th Month, ninth, 1781, the very period at which the "Tories" must have been at their worst: "Samuel Hoag is appointed to take care of the meeting-house, and to keep the door locked and windows fastened, and to nail up the hole that goes up into the Garratt." Can it be that this order was entered on the minutes as a result of that fabled event when the "Tories" robbed the store on the site of the present Craft place? They had hidden for that purpose in the loft of the meeting-house and were discovered by some young Quakers who

were skylarking in the meeting-house under pretense of cleaning it. The story is that one of the young men being dared—of course by a maiden—to open the trapdoor into the garret, and look there for the Tories, found them hiding there. The bandits, being discovered, tumbled down the hole from the garret, and compelled their discoverers to go with them to the store; and proceeded at once to plunder it; relying no doubt on the non-resistant character of the people of the Hill. They stacked their arms at the door and went about their business in a thorough manner. But there was that in the blood of some Quakers there that could not contain itself within the bounds of non-resistance, and one of them, Benjamin Ferris, cried out, "Seize the rascals." In the scrimmage that resulted from the excitement of this remark, a British officer was recognized among the Tories by the young lady who had by her challenge to the young man discovered them, and being taunted by her was so incensed that he stabbed her. It is only said in closing the story that the blood of both the fair and adventurous young Quakeress whose abounding spirits brought on all the trouble, as well as that of the leader of the "Tories," flows in the veins of

some who live on the Hill in the twentieth century.

The "Tories" of the Revolutionary days furnish the substance for the stories of violence that are told about the fireside to Quaker Hill boys and girls. It is difficult however to persuade those who have heard these tales to relate them. Those who know them best are the very ones who cannot recall them in systematic or orderly form. I will only mention two of the free lances of the time. The chiefest of all bandit-leaders of those turbulent times was Waite Vaughn. It is related that this fellow was the head of a band of Tories, which means locally the same as the term "Cowboys" or "Skinners" means in the history of Westchester County. The latter were lawless bands who infested the regions in which the armies made civil life insecure, and subsisted by stealing cattle, plundering houses, robbing and often murdering citizens. "They seemed," says a writer, "like the savages to enjoy the sight of the sufferings they inflicted. Oftentimes they left their wretched victims from whom they had plundered their all, hung up by their arms, and sometimes by their thumbs, on barndoors, enduring the agony of wounds that had been inflicted to

wrest from them their property. These miserable beings were frequently relieved by the American patrol."

The famous spy of the Revolution, Enoch Crosby, who is said to have been Cooper's model for the hero of the novel "The Spy," came to Quaker Hill during the Revolution, and in pursuance of a plan he was at that time following, got together a band of Tory volunteers who were planning to join the British Army, and delivered them to the Continental forces. In this he was assisted by Col. Morehouse, who kept a tavern in South Dover, one-half mile south of the M. E. Church, opposite the brick house, as I am informed by Philip H. Smith. It was here that Marquis de Castellux stopped on his way to meet Washington at Fishkill, and his description of the night spent there is one of the most interesting pages in his "Travels in North America." The New Hampshire drovers, with their fat oxen for the Continental Army at Fishkill, were a very interesting type to him. To the country at that time they were a familiar figure. I am told that the taverns all along the road from New York to Albany, and from Hartford to Fishkill, were placed about every four miles, for the accommodation of those driving cattle, and of other travelers.

## THE CAMP OF WASHINGTON—TRADITION.

The encampment on and near Quaker Hill of soldiers of the Revolutionary Armies has always been the most frequently mentioned and the most treasured of the traditions of the place. It has been a matter of interest to sift out the actual facts from the harvest of tradition, to learn how many and what proportion of the army of Washington camped here, for how long, and on what camping site. It is asserted in common tradition that the greater part of the army of Washington was here, and that is the statement in a letter of an eye witness, which I will quote later. I have encountered reasons for doubting this, though in this and other matters I have found the current traditions, so far as they apply to matters of fact, and not to sentiment or to details very precise, to be substantially exact. Now in this case the tradition is that the entire army of Washington camped here for one winter, that the artillery was disposed on the slopes of the hill known as Purgatory—so named because it is halfway between Quaker Hill and every where else—the infantry on the valleys adjacent and the cavalry on the ridge above and south of



the Milan Stedwell place, now owned by B. West Clinedinst. It is asserted that one may still find traces of the ovens in which the soldiers did their cooking, and of the stone houses in which the officers lived. It is likewise asserted that the Revolutionary ancestress of Milan Stedwell, Lizzie Brundage, the wife of James Stedwell, Milan's great grandmother, cooked for the soldiers encamped on that hill in an arch-kettle holding two barrels.

It is related that the soldiers often robbed surrounding farms, and I am told that on one of the forays they entered and robbed the home of Edward and Anna Briggs, lately the residence of Homer Briggs, a half-mile east of the Akin Briggs' place, of the corn stored in an upper chamber. The lady of the house when they came down stairs asked them to stay to breakfast, and they were thereby made much ashamed, and went away declaring they would never rob that house again, because they were treated so courteously. I am not told whether they took the corn with them, or indeed whether they stayed to breakfast. But the story is wholly consistent with the statements of Bancroft and of Irving, that during that winter the troops, while they were well clad with garments sent from

France, were in sad need of food, often lacking meat for days at a time and again grain for days, and at times being in want of both at once.

It is also related that the old meeting-house was used for a hospital by these troops, which Dr. Fallon's letter above will confirm, and that they buried their dead in the grounds of the older meeting-house across the road, later purchased by Mr. Bancroft. The meeting assembled in the meantime in Stephen Osborn's house, then the Isaac Osborn house.

One of the traditions of the troops here is that of the residence here of the noble Commander-in-Chief of the armies of the Revolution. The house which stood on the site of that of Mr. Archibald Dodge is designated by verbal tradition as his quarters during that time, in which it is also asserted that the trial of General Schuyler, under the presidency of General B. Lincoln, occurred. The latter is said by some to have occurred in the house by the road belonging to Mr. T. J. Arnold. Mrs. Jane Crane tells me that Washington had his horse shod many times at the smithy located on the slope of Birch Hill, south of Will Akin's, by Joel Winter Church, whose autograph she has, and that the Father of

his country was unable at that time to pay the bill, but did so after the close of the war. This is in harmony with Washington's practice elsewhere. Mrs. Crane also tells me that she had it from Benjamin Haviland that his father, then a small boy, living on the Whitehead place, in Haviland Hollow, went up the road toward Quaker Hill to meet and see General Washington, who with his cavalcade of attendant officers and others, came to dine at his father's house, standing in the yard of the Whitehead place, nearer the road.

It has been a pleasure, and to some degree a surprise, to be able to confirm these traditions of the residence here of Washington and his troops, upon the authority of the best records of the Revolution. The name of the vicinage in those days was Fredericksburgh, a name which is as good a clue to the history of that encampment of the army here as is the name Oblong to the history of local Quakerism.

#### QUOTATION OF AUTHORITY.

The authority for the belief that Washington resided here is, first, Washington Irving, who in his "Life of Washington" says, "Washington moved his camp to a rear position at Fredericksburgh on the

borders of Connecticut, and about thirty miles from West Point, so as to be ready for a movement to the eastward or a speedy junction for the defense of the Hudson." Benson J. Lossing, in his "Fieldbook of the Revolution," (Vol. I. p. 331,) makes the same assertion.

The time of this encampment of the army and of its General here was the Autumn of 1778. The circumstances of the preceding summer will be recalled by readers of history. It was the year following the terrible Winter at Valley Forge. Philadelphia had been evacuated in that Spring and the British army held only two posts on the Eastern coast, New York and Newport. Frederick the Great of Prussia, on learning the facts as to the British retreat to New York, stated his opinion as follows: "Clinton has gained no advantage except to reach New York with the wreck of his army; America is probably lost to England." In August of the preceding Summer, Washington, coming to White Plains from which he had been forced away in 1776, wrote to a friend: "After two years' manœuvering and the strangest vicissitudes, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and the offending party at the beginning is now

reduced to the use of the spade and the pickaxe for defense. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked that has not gratitude to acknowledge his obligations." (Bancroft LV, p. 287.)

In the Fall therefore of 1778, while still the terrible poverty of the government and the weakness of Congress were leaving the army of Washington in a low state of efficiency, yet in the dawn of a day of hope, Washington was called into this inland neighborhood by the aspect of the British forces in New York. A letter of his, dated from Fredericksburgh, says: "There are but two capital objects which they can have in view, except the defeat and dispersion of this army; and these are the possession of the fortifications in the Highlands, by which means the communication between the eastern and southern states would be cut off, and the destruction of the French fleet at Boston. These objects, being far apart, render it very difficult to secure the one effectually without exposing the other eminently. I have, therefore, in order to do the best the nature of the case will admit, strengthened the works and reinforced the garrison in the High-

lands, and thrown the army into such position as to move eastward or westward as circumstances may require. The place I now date from is about thirty miles from the fort on the North River (West Point); and I have some troops nearer, others farther off, but all on the road leading to Boston, if we should be dragged that way."

This is the only mention of the locality found in Washington's letters. The above letter is dated the twelfth of September, 1778, the first date on which he writes from Fredericksburgh. A letter to the President of Congress on the twenty-third, says: "The army marched from White Plains on the 16th, and is now encamped in different places. Three brigades, composed of Virginia troops, part of the right wing, under command of General Putnam, are at Robinson, near West Point, and two brigades more, composing the remainder, are with Baron DeKalb at Fishkill Plains, about ten miles from the town on the road leading to Sharon. The second line with Lord Sterling is in the vicinity of Fredericksburgh; and the whole of the left wing at Danbury, under command of General Gates."

The letters of Washington, dated from his headquarter here, show that he was here continuously, except for an absence of

a week at Fishkill which was a great depot of supplies, from the twelfth of September in that year until the last of November. I can find no other record of his staying in this vicinity, though there were occasions on which he may, as a traveler between Hartford and Fishkill, have spent a night here.

#### OFFICIAL HEADQUARTERS.

The Headquarters of Washington in this vicinity are asserted by unanimous verbal, but no written, tradition to have been located in the Reed Ferris house, on the site of which live the Dodge-Arnold family. It is certain that Washington was frequently in this house as a guest, and perhaps used it as a residence. But there is evidence that cannot be mistaken which points to the location of the official Headquarters in a house nearer the village of Pawling, on the site of which the Roberts house now stands.

This evidence, for which I am indebted to Mr. L. S. Patrick, of Marinette, Wisconsin, is as follows: First the map made for Washington in 1778 of Fredericksburgh by Robert Erskine, official historiographer of the Revolution. In this map the Roberts location is evidently indicated. Second, among the personal expenditures of

Washington at this time, of which he left full record, there is mention of many purchases from Reed Ferris, but no item indicating occupation of his property or premises. Third, among those expenditures is one bearing date of November 28, 1778, the day of his departure: "To cash paid John Kane for use of his house, &c., 144 dollars. The name is spelled "Keane" instead of Kane, but Washington was notoriously independent of the rules in that matter. Fourth, on September 23, 1778, Governor Clinton wrote to Robert R. Livingston; "The army has left the Plains, and are now posted along the mountain from Danbury to West Point. Headquarters at John Kain's at Fredericksburgh, for which place General Washington after having visited the forts, passed through Fishkill on Sunday last." So far therefore as evidence exists it is to the effect that the official headquarters was in John Kane's house on the site of the Roberts house, and that Washington was a frequent visitor, with his officers, at the house of Reed Ferris, on the site of which Mr. Dodge now lives.

The house in Pawling, now the residence of Mr. Charles H. Roberts, stands on the site of the Headquarters. It is thus described by Mrs. Elizabeth D. Kane, of Kane, Pa.,



herself a descendant, as was her husband, Thomas L. Kane, of John Kane, who owned the place in 1778: "John Kane's house was conveniently built for an officer's headquarters. There was a large dwelling house, connected by a stone walled passage, 65 feet long lighted by windows, with a large store building which had dwelling-rooms above. John Kane so describes it in his petition to Parliament in 1794. He says that his 'house being situated near the theatre of war, and in the great route of Congressional troops and militia in going to and returning from the army, he was exposed to the frequent insults of a licentious soldiery, &c.'

"The homestead consisted of five lots. 87½ acres bought from Robert Gilbert Livingstone, 21st October, 1762; 96¾ acres also situated in Beekman Precinct, Dutchess County, bought of Beverly Robinson, 21 March, 1763; 50 acres from Sarah Bemis in 1770; 50 acres from Wellcom Davis; 67 acres from Jos. A. Miller. I do not know on which the house stood.

"In the year 1820, Aug. 14, John K. Kane writing to his father, Elisha Kane, says: 'I went yesterday to Pawlingstown and ate a bread and cheese luncheon in the house in which you were born. It is now

a tavern and belongs to Gideon Slocum. His wife's name was Cook, and her mother was an intimate friend of grandmother's. They treated me kindly and would take no pay. The house is ruinous, and Slocum intends pulling it down next year. I made a rough sketch of the front of it.' (Here follows the sketch): 'The extreme buildings are of wood, the connection of stone. The range of buildings is near 100 feet long. The yard in front is planted with poplar trees.'

"There was a large stone building which had been built for a store-house, with family rooms above; and this connected by a stone covered way with a dwelling at a distance of some fifty or sixty feet. This covered way was lighted by windows and formed perhaps the principal feature of the series of buildings. The dwelling-house was of frame, clap-boarded, two stories high, and finished with some pretensions to style. I found it somewhat decayed, in charge of a family who carried me through it, and pointed out the room which General Washington occupied, when he was the guest of my grandfather in 1778."

John Kane was a Loyalist, and obnoxious to the patriots. His estate was therefore, by a law passed in October,

1779, confiscated, and himself banished from the State on pain of death. The dignified old magistrate is said to have been tied to a cart and drummed out of town.

He petitioned the Crown for restoration of his property, or recompense for his losses; but he was charged with disloyalty while a member of the Provincial Legislature, and although he made reasonable answer, he got nothing.

#### COURT MARTIAL OF SCHUYLER.

Connected with the stay of the army here and its general officers is the court-martial of General Schuyler for neglect of duty. The whole may be read in the Collections of the New York Historical Society for 1879. The charge is stated as follows:

NEGLECT OF DUTY in not being present at Ticonderoga to discharge the functions of his command, from the middle of June, 1777, until it was no longer possible to maintain Ticonderoga and Mt. Independence, consistent with the safety of the troops and stores; when he should have caused a retreat to be made, for the preservation of both, under the fifth article of the tenth section of the Rules and Articles of War.

The Court Martial continued its sittings during the first three days of October, and it is perhaps significant that during those three days Washington was absent, while immediately after them he returned. The

verdict of the court is as follows: "The Court having considered the charge against Major General Schuyler, and the evidence in his defence, are unanimously of opinion that he is NOT GUILTY of any neglect of duty in not being at Ticonderoga as charged; and the Court do therefore acquit him with the highest honor. B. Lincoln, President."

It is not positively known in what house this Court-Martial sat. Tradition says "a yellow house." Was there one so named and known? The best of evidence indicates that the trial was at Reed Ferriss's house, which was the quarters of General Lincoln, and at times of Washington. On this site lives the Dodge-Arnold family.

It is interesting to us to know that this verdict of the court-martial, with all the proceedings, was forwarded to Congress, then meeting in Philadelphia, by no less a person than Lafayette, who desired with Washington's endorsement to secure a furlough for a visit to France. To secure that endorsement and to fight a duel, it is said he visited Fredericksburgh. It may be that at this time he was lodged in the old house formerly situated on the site of the present residence of Richard Osborn. He undoubtedly visited the Commander-in-

Chief at this time, and the tradition as to his lodgings is not to be doubted. Washington was frequently the guest of Reed Ferris; who had recently erected a new house, the door-stone of which Mr. Arnold still shows, inscribed with the initials and date, 1771, of the erection of the house. Reed Ferris' daughter Molly, nineteen years old, was then the young wife of John Akin, grandson of David Akin, the pioneer of 1742, and her first born, Albro Akin, was then six months old. One can imagine the courtly dignity and condescension of the Father of his Country to the fair girl-wife and her infant boy, whom he saw so frequently in the house of her father, his host. Albro Akin, that six months' infant, was as a man known personally to many now living on Quaker Hill. His oldest son, Albert J. Akin, is our host, and the President of this Conference.

From his headquarters here Washington wrote to Gates at Danbury, giving orders as to the repair of the roads to Boston, and announcing his route thither, if the British attack that city, by the way of New Milford, Woodbury to Waterbury and Farmington. It was from this place that he wrote the famous business letter dismissing Mr. Jonas Hill from the care of one of his planta-

tions in Virginia, that in King William County—a letter which exhibits his care of his private business in all of its details, calves, tobacco, profits, accounts, in the very years when he was bearing the burdens of the American Conflict upon his steadfast mind.

The letter to Congress discussing a plan of attacking Canada by a combined force of French and American troops and ships, a plan suggested by Lafayette, was written from his residence here. Washington opposes the plan as calculated to give to the French a too strong footing in America; and with great sagacity and foresight, while declining the suggestion of the President of Congress that he counsel with Lafayette as to his reply, he urges upon Congress reasons drawn from the interests of the American continent in opposition to the project. His opinion, as usual, carried the day; so that, although he fought no battle of the sword or musket in our town, he gained a victory in the profounder arts of the intellect.

#### BOARDMAN'S DESCRIPTION OF WASHINGTON.

I have reserved until almost my last quotation of authorities part of a letter written by one who saw Washington on Quaker Hill, and wrote about it before his death.

The original letter is the property of the Boardman family of New Milford, descendants of the writer. Both for its manner and matter I will quote the letter in its original form.

“I first saw General Washington on the 17th of October, 1778, when for a short time he had his headquarters at a house then occupied by Colonel Kane (great-grandfather of the late Dr. Kane) some two miles westerly of the Quaker Meeting-house on Quaker Hill, in the present town of Pawling, formerly called Fredericksburgh, Dutchess County, and on the road leading to Poughkeepsie. The encampment of the largest portion of the Continental Army then collected in one place, was on the same ridge of land with the Quaker Meeting-house, and from two to three miles south of it, on the road from Cold Spring to Carmel, the present county seat of Putnam county, and within the limits of the town of Patterson in the same county. I was at that time in my tenth year, and like all boys belonging to ardent Whig families, at that stirring period, was intensely interested in the great events occurring around me. My father and mother took me with them to see the camp, then about ten miles distant from their residence.

The 17th of October was selected as the time for the visit, because it was known that there would be a grand parade and festival on that day, it being the first anniversary of the surrender of Burgoyne. For the same reason many others availed themselves of the occasion to visit the camp, and a large crowd of both sexes was collected. As everybody was eager to see General Washington, they huddled together on the road leading from the General's headquarters to the camp, all on horseback, as everybody then rode who rode at all. The cavalcade of officers and their attendants who had gone to headquarters to escort the Commander-in-Chief down to the place of entertainment soon made their appearance. As it was passing the company of spectators, my father inquired of a soldier standing by the road, whether "his Excellency" was in the train which was just riding by. He answered, I remember thus:—"Yes, sir; he's on the right hand in front on the blaze faced horse," and a noble horse he was. The cavalcade, immediately after it had passed the throng of spectators, wheeled to the left of the road into an open field at the foot of a very abrupt but short ascent to the flat upon the top, where the tables



were set under a long shade of green boughs. As soon as the General's horse came to the foot of the hill he sprang forward with the swiftness of a bird, and ascended by leaps rather than the ordinary gallop and reached the top before any other of the escort got half way up. Certainly never before, nor during the long years since, did I behold so noble an equestrian figure; for General Washington excelled in horsemanship, as he did in everything else he undertook.

“When the general and his attendants had arrived at their destination, the spectators dismounted, and took their stand outside the assembly of officers, who joined in numerous parties in conversation for a long time before dinner was served. My eyes were riveted during the whole time upon General Washington, whose noble personal appearance and majestic bearing so far exceeded any other present as to leave no room for comparison. A lofty stature, two inches over six feet, with a form as perfect in its proportions as possible to represent both gracefulness and strength—a nearer and repeated view of him many years afterwards, when in the office of President of the United States, enables me to say that my first sentiment of his per-

sonal appearance was not mistaken, though formed in the enthusiasm of boyhood. I gazed at him for at least two hours, scarcely having patience to have my attention turned to other distinguished officers whom my father pointed out to me, such as Baron Steuben, General Knox and the Baron De Kalb. I then believed that I was looking at the noblest and best man in the world, and eighty years of reading and reflection which have since elapsed have in no wise changed that early impression. The General was dressed in a blue coat with buff facings and large gold epaulets with buff colored small clothes and vest, and boots reaching quite to the knee. His hair, of which he had a great quantity, was craped and turned back from the forehead, and dressed in a very large and long braid or twist upon his back; the whole profusely powdered as was then the fashion. His sword was what was called a hanger, shaped like a sabre but much shorter and lighter. It was worn attached to a belt around the waist under the coat. The handle was of green ivory, the hilt and guard of it silver, and was the same that was presented to Congress some years ago by the relative to whom it was bequeathed by the General's will. Such was my impres-

sion at the sight of the greatest man of his own or any other age. The picture is stamped on my memory in living light and the time seems only to increase the freshness of the coloring."

#### WINTER CAMP ON THE HILL.

The last letter of Washington written from this town; November 27, 1778, gives the following disposition of his forces for the winter, and throws light on the question of the number of troops he had in this vicinity. From this it would appear that the statement of Mr. Boardman that the largest assembly of the Continental Army was in this vicinity is either to be taken with the allowance due to mere recollection, or is to be understood as referring only to a short period. After locating nine brigades of the army west of the Hudson, and six on the east side thereof, of which six one was at West Point, two at Fishkill and Continental Village, which was a small cluster of houses in S. W. Phillipstown, he continues, "The remaining three brigades, composed of New Hampshire and Connecticut troops and Hayne's Regiment, are in the vicinity of Danbury, for the protection of the country lying along the Sound, to cover our mag-

azines lying along the Connecticut River, and to aid the Highlands in any serious movements of the enemy that way." I am inclined to think from this and other statements, uncontradicted by any facts so clear, that the army which was here in this time was never larger than would appear in this statement; while the troops which wintered here cannot have been more than perhaps a regiment or two. However, on this, there is still room for further information. It is at least probable that the review mentioned by Mr. Boardman, perhaps intended as a show of strength to the enemy, was an assembly of the most of the troops between Danbury and Fishkill.

The same letter describes the character of the encampment in terms which harmonize perfectly with the local traditions and with the stories on the remains of that encampment on Purgatory Hill. "It is unnecessary to add," continues Washington, "that the troops must again have recourse to the expedient of hutting, as they did last year. But as they are now well clad, we have had more leisure to make some little preparation for winter quarters. I hope they will be in more comfortable situation than they were in the preceding winter." This comparison of Quaker Hill and other

locations in this vicinity with Valley Forge, pictures the winter that followed to the imagination in vivid colors. And every old family in the neighborhood has its tradition of the presence at their door of the hungry and needy soldier of the Revolution during that winter.

#### CONCLUSION.

With the close of the Revolution the dramatic and interesting history of the Hill in the Eighteenth Century closes. The next era of interest is that of the first forty years of the nineteenth, the era of turnpikes, the earliest of which, March 30, 1802, in this county was "the Quaker Hill Turnpike," extending from Jephtha Sabin's on Quaker Hill to the foot of the mountain called "Fishkill" thence to Peter Brill's in Beekman. It is the era of the greatest growth and most numerous population the Hill has ever seen, as many abandoned house-sites and half-filled cellars demonstrate; it is the period of the great disruption in the Oblong Quaker Meeting. I have attempted to write of the earlier stratum of history, which is typified by the old field across the road there, long since ploughed up and modernized, in which lie the bones of the Quaker pioneers, who placed no head-

stones and wrote few diaries and no histories; the field sown also with the bones of the soldiers of the Revolution. They lie in peace together, those men of the inner light and the outer plainness, and those men who, looking on the outer affairs of life, saw the necessity and responded to the call to take the weapons of death in their hands; who died far from home, in the lingering anguish of the improvised hospital, in the bare, fireless meeting-house. Side by side their bodies have gone to dust, and side by side their spirits have gone to God who made them, whose mercy was as necessary for the one as for the other. These all died in their faith. God grant that their faith may not die with their descendants and successors.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY.

- James Smith's History of Dutchess County.  
Philip H. Smith's History of Dutchess County.  
Lossing's "Field Book of the Revolution."  
Bancroft's "History of the United States."  
Irving's "Life of Washington."  
"Gazetteer of New York," 1812.  
Akin and Ferriss and Wing and Hoag "Family Records."  
De Chastellux's "Travels of North America."  
Anbury's "Travels in North America."  
Thacher's "Military Journal of the Revolution."  
Wilson's "Rise and Fall of the Slave Power."

Records of Oblong Meeting House, Purchase Meeting, and of the New York Yearly Meeting.

Barnum's "Enoch Crosby."

"The Writings of Washington," especially in Fall of 1778.

Proceedings of the New York Historical Society, 1859, etc.

Poughkeepsie Eagle, July, 1876, Lossing's Articles.

New Milford Gazette 1858, Boardman's Letter. Fishkill (New York) Packet, 1776-1783.

New York Mercury, 1776-1783.

Public Papers of George Clinton, First Governor of New York.

Map of Fredericksburgh and vicinity, 1778, by Robert Eschine. Photo by L. S. Patrick; in Lenox Library.

#### NOTE.

It seems to me worth while to add a short account of the records of the Oblong Meeting. It has cost a great deal of time to discover where these records are located; I am indebted to the generosity of Miss Cornelia Taylor for the means of consulting them. The Meeting was divided in the year 1828 into two bodies of Quakers, of which that retaining the use of the Meeting-House ceased to assemble in 1884. At the time of the division each of the two bodies retained the records in the possession of its members, each maintained that it was the original body of the Society of Friends. Until recent days the records were thus dispersed, chiefly in two places. Some of them are in private houses. The Hicksite Quakers through their Yearly Meeting collected most of their records, and put them in charge of

their Custodian, John Cox, Jr., in the safe at their Meeting-house at Sixteenth St. Records in the possession of the Orthodox Friends were collected in the storage vaults of the Produce Exchange, in the charge of Charles W, Lawrence.

In 1903, by joint action of the Yearly Meetings of the two Societies, the following "Joint Committee on Records of the Religious Society of Friends" was intrusted with the care of these previous sources: John Cox, Jr., Chairman, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, James Wood, Charles W. Lawrence, Alfred Busselle, Franklin T. Carpenter, Ellwood Burdsall. The following statement is quoted from their official paper:

"The records, documents and papers belonging, or relating, to the meetings and their allied organizations throughout the two New York Yearly Meetings (one held at Fifteenth Street, New York, and sometimes called "Hicksite," the other held at Twentieth Street, New York, and elsewhere, and sometimes called "Orthodox,") were brought together in 1904 and placed in the care of this Joint Committee at the Fifteenth Street meeting house, entrance, 226 East Sixteenth Street.

"All volumes are numbered and catalogued to facilitate examination, and a descriptive "Catalogue of the Records of, or relating to, New York Yearly Meeting and its subordinate branches," by John Cox, Jr., begun in 1897, is nearing completion. It includes all known records from 1663.



“Many lost volumes and papers have been found and restored. We earnestly request all who have any such books or papers in their possession or who know of such to notify the Committee of the fact, and if not ready to send them promptly to give information as to their nature and period, so that they may be properly listed in the Catalogue.

“The Records may be seen in the presence of the Custodian by members of either New York Yearly Meeting without fee. Other persons are charged a fee of \$1.00 per hour, minimum fee \$1.00. All applications to see the records should be addressed to the Custodian, John Cox, Jr., 156 Fifth Avenue, New York, (telephone connection) Examinations to be made at convenience of Custodian by previous appointment, or John Cox, Jr., will make the examination and report thereon at the same rate.”

From the year 1744 Oblong Meeting was a meeting of record, but for thirteen years the records of the minutes were written on loose sheets, which have been lost. They may indeed be in existence, for in 1760 the meeting directed Clerk Zebulon Ferriss to record the minutes for the time he has been clerk; and appoints two to record the previous minutes from the establishment of the meeting. If those two did as they were directed, there should be a book of the oldest records of the Hill in existence; and in any case there may be, in some old leather bound trunk, leaves of records

from 1744 to 1757, whose value is beyond calculation. The minutes of the meeting from 1757 until the division and from that date until the Hicksite Meeting was laid down in 1884, are in the possession of Mr. Cox. From 1828, the year of the division until the present year, the minutes of the Orthodox Friends are in the possession of Richard Osborn. The minutes of the Women's Meeting previous to 1807 are missing; one volume, from 9th Mo., 14th, 1807 to 3rd Mo., 16th, 1835 is with John Cox. In the same place are three volumes of the record of Births, Marriages and Deaths: one from 1745 to 1774; then, after a gap, due to the absence of a volume, is the second, from 1786 to 1866; and a third volume of births and deaths alone from 1828 to 1893. Volumes lacking in this greatest collection of the minutes and other records are the records of birth and deaths previous to 1828: and of marriages from 1774 to 1786.

The records of the present Orthodox Meeting in full, as well as the following two volumes of the records of the Preparative Meeting of Ministers and Elders at Oblong, are in the possession of Richard T. Osborn on Quaker Hill; first from 10th month, 12th, 1783, to 1st month, 13th, 1878; and

second, from 1878 to present time. An interesting minute in the older of these volumes is the record of the appointment to the ministry of Peter Lossing, an ancestor I am informed, of Benson J. Lossing, the historian.

Last of all, the records of births and deaths of the meeting, from 1810 to the present day, following the line of the Orthodox society, is in the possession of Robert Post.

The oldest records therefore of the doings in this meeting are contained in the records of Purchase Meeting, the mother society, from the earliest date, about 1741, at which Oblong is mentioned, to 1744, when it became an independent monthly meeting. Most of the early settlers on the Oblong came through Purchase, married under it in many cases and left their names on its pages.

Probably many of these old records are lost; but there must be some of them still on the Hill, in the old rag and paper bags of old families. There never should be an auction, and never a house-cleaning, without an alert watch for the discovery of those old records. The state of an old volume of Men's Minutes of Branch Preparative Meeting is a pathetic record of the care

that all these books have had. It is encased in the original buckskin bag in which it was carried to the meeting by the clerk, doubtless on horse back. Its lids closed with leathern thongs. But sixteen of its leaves, one of them dated 1790, have been mutilated. Out of each page two circular holes are cut away, to make covers for jelly cups. It would seem that a careful clerk had a frivolous granddaughter, who "probably thought," as John Cox says, "the minutes were so dry that they would keep the jelly from moulding."

#### MAP OF QUAKER HILL AND VICINITY.

Made by Robert Erskine, 1778-80, official geographer to the Continental army. Landmarks are as follows: Pawling village is now located near the words "Waters divide here." "Fredericksburgh" is now Patterson. "New Fairfield" is now Sherman. The Old Meeting House is at the cross roads west of "New Fairfield" and east of Hamersley Lake. Original in possession of New York Historical Society.







LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 109 573 0

